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**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry  
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19 March 2021

1. The government has been conducting relief measures on taxation to help ease the pain for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and made an exemption for the 2-per-cent advance income tax on exports from 1.4.2020 to 31.3.2021.
2. There are still socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the exemption for the 2-per-cent advance income tax on exports will be extended to 30 April 2021 according to the permission of the State Administration Council.

Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry

## Venerable monks receive COVID-19 second dose

THE second dose of COVID-19 vaccine was given to Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa and venerable monks yesterday morning in Yangon.

A total of 45 venerable monks, including Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa, Insein Ywarma Monastery Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Ti Loka Bhivamsa, Thanlyin Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Candima Bhivamsa, were given the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine by the medical team of Yangon Region Command.

Brig-Gen Nyunt Win Swe, Commander of Yangon Region Command and U Zaw Win, a member of the Region Administration Council, and officials paid a courtesy call.—MNA



Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhamo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa seen receiving the second dose of COVID vaccine yesterday.

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**Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
State Administration Council  
Nine Objectives**

**1. Political affairs**

- (a) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner
- (B) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)
- (c) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy

**2. Economic affairs**

- (a) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other

sectors of the economy as well

- (b) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people
- (c) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State

**3. Social affairs**

- (a) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit
- (b) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters
- (c) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

**Five future programmes of State Administration Council**

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty democracy election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.

**Military hospitals continue providing healthcare to civilians**

MILITARY hospitals in the townships of regions and states keep providing medical treatments to the people to solve their healthcare services difficulties. A total of 80,965 outpatients and 4,097 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date.

Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 3,744 major operations and 1,975 minor operations. The senior doctors treat serious cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 5,186 babies while bringing 5,186 pregnant women to the respective military hospitals.

Officials from the respective commands also provided the patients with foods, and medial workers were provided with cash assistance.—MNA

A local seen under treatment at the military hospital.



**Military medical corps provide healthcare in township hospitals**



THE Tatmadaw medical teams consisted of Tatmadaw doctors, specialists, and nurses, have been providing necessary medical treatment to the patients in military hospitals and public hospitals.

The Tatmadaw medical team continued to provide healthcare services such as surgery, dental and oral healthcare, osteoporosis, obstetrics, gynaecology, hypertension and heart disease to the patients in Thazi Township Hospital, Hanza hospital, Yinmabin hospital, Tagaung Public

Hospital in Thabeikkyin Township, Sintgaing hospital in Kyaukse township, Yintaw hospital in Pyawbwe township, Kyauktaga Public Hospital, Donzayit hospital in Shwegen Township and Latpadan township hospital yesterday.

Officials from respective commands also inspected the hospitals' medical services. They comforted the patients by providing food aids and necessary things. Locals are reportedly satisfied with the medical support of Tatmadaw.—MNA

Tatmadaw medical team seen providing locals with necessary healthcare services.

## Authorities are exercising restraint as peacefully as possible

EFFORTS must be exerted to develop Myanmar sports into ones that are systemic and meet international standards and to support athletes in respective states and regions to participate in international events. All border crossings have been opened for the development of trade. Measures must be taken to enable internally displaced persons to return to their native places and to arrange their secure social-economic lives. Efforts will be continued to make to vaccinate people against COVID-19. It is found that riots and protests are being incited on social media, and authorities are exercising restraint as peacefully as possible. Efforts were made to repatriate Myanmar nationals detained in Malaysia, and a total of 1,086 Myanmar nationals from Malaysia were brought back by Tatmadaw vessels. Measures are being taken to bring back those who are still left in Malaysia. The repatriation of Myanmar nationals who were abroad is one of the achievements of the council

*(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 2 March 2021)*

## Union Minister U Ko Ko visits Kalaywa Tawya Naga Hlainggu Pariyatti Monastery and national library (Yangon)

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko visited Kalaywa Tawya Naga Hlainggu Pariyatti Monastery in Mayangon Township and the National Library (Yangon) yesterday. During the Pariyatti Monastery visit, the Union Minister donated K5 million to Kalaywa Tawya Padarna Nayaka Sayadaw Bhaddanta Wilathagga.

After paying homage to the Sayadaw, the Union Minister said he would make Theravada Buddhism's sustainability efforts, adding exceptional support for monastic schools. The ceremony of religious titles conferment will be held on 27 March.

Afterwards, in the afternoon, the Union Minister arrived at the National Library (Yangon) and inspected the Multimedia Room, Digital Library Room, Children Story Telling Room, Children Library Room, Special Reading Room, Data Centre, Exhibition Hall and the man-



MoRAC minister seen viewing around the multimedia room at the National Library (Yangon) yesterday.

agement of bookshelf and conference room.

The Union Minister instructed to make an effort to accelerate the provision of library services in the post-COVID-19 period, to promote library ac-

tivities and to work with international libraries to develop the library industry.

He also met with the officers from the Department of Historical Research and National Library. He instructed them to

strictly follow the Civil Service law, code of conducts, orders and directives and provide public services willingly.

At the National Library (Yangon), each IG Publishing E-books Database is available

for download on the library portal or at the National Library and books on Asian countries, e-resources such as audio and e-books on children's literature can be found online as well as E-Takatho and academic databases for students in Multimedia Room.

People can also quickly and easily find catalogue information of the collected literature in the Digital Library Room on the National Library website. The library has arranged rare press and ancient literature Pay Parabaik Reading Room; books and audio contents for the visually impaired persons and Story Room for children; Audio Video Room to show documentary films on Myanmar culture and ethnic traditions, weekly/monthly show programmes.

The e-resources of the National Library's collection of literature can be accessed at [www.nlm.gov.mm](http://www.nlm.gov.mm). —MNA

## Coordination meeting on loan and grant projects funded by World Bank holds



MIFER deputy minister joins the coordination meeting on the World Bank-aided projects yesterday.

THE Coordination Meeting on the loan and grant projects implementing in Myanmar funded by the World Bank, led by U Than Aung Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, the officials from the respective ministries explained the current implementation status

of the ongoing loan and grant projects funded by the World Bank for Myanmar, as well as the update status of their cooperation with the Bank. After hearing the reports from ministries concerned, Deputy Minister gave the suggestions and guidelines for the continuation of projects.

The meeting was also attended by the senior officials from Ministry of Planning, Fi-

nance and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Transport and Communication, Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Social Welfare Relied and Resettlement, Central Bank of Myanmar, Yangon City Development Committee and Foreign Economic Relations Department.

## MoALI discusses establishment of fish processing economic zones

THE Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation held the coordination meeting on the establishment of Fish Processing Economic Zones on the border to develop fisheries in Myanmar.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo, Deputy Minister Dr Aung Gyi, officials from the administration councils of Taninthayi Region, Ayeyawady Region, Kayin State, Mon State, Rakhine State, the Director-General for the Fishery Department and officials from the region/state fishery departments, Myanmar Fisheries Federation and Taninthayi Region Fisheries Federation.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo said fisheries also play an essential role in implementing the country's economic recovery affected by the COVID-19 crisis. He said his ministry is coordinating to develop fish processing economic zones, which create employment opportunities for local people



The MoALI Union minister and deputy minister join the online coordination meeting on fish processing economic zones yesterday.

and produce high-value fishery products for domestic and foreign markets, emphasizing the development of fishery products not only for export but also for export for consumer safety to ensure domestic consumption.

Myanmar will strive to transform itself from a seafood exporter to a high-value producer. In order to overcome the difficulties encountered in carrying out these activities, large-scale industrial zones based on agricul-

ture and livestock have been set up in the regions and divisions. He said his ministry is drawing up the necessary plans for the establishment of states.

Myanmar's fisheries sector includes 3,200 offshore fishing

vessels, 19,192 Inshore fishing vessels and 260 fishing vessels that are operating in coastal areas and with about 500,000 acres of fish/shrimp ponds in regions and states and 124 factories, it is a source of foreign income not only for domestic consumption but also for annual export.

The Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) and local fisheries associations and The Department of Fisheries cooperate to solve the difficulties in cross-border exports in the COVID-19 crisis.

The meeting aimed to turn the fishery business from buyer market to seller market during unforeseen disasters such as the COVID-19 in Taninthayi Region and to implement the establishment of a fish processing zone as soon as possible to ensure the export of the processed products from the export of frozen fish raw materials and to guarantee the income and employment of the citizens. -- MNA

## Broadcasting governing body-BGB holds coordination meeting

THE Broadcasting Governing Body-BGB held the first coordination meeting (2/2021) through video conferencing yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister for Information U Ye Tint, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the BGB, addressed the meeting. Vice-chairperson, Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, Director-General for Myanmar Radio and Television U Ye Naing discussed the status of current activities and tax payment of Content Providers.

Officials from FM Bagan,

Padamyar FM, Shwe FM, Forever Group Co., Ltd, Shwe Thanlwin Media Co., Ltd, Family Entertainment Group, Fortune Broadcasting Company Limited, KMA Tele Media Holdings Company Limited, My Multi-Media Group Company Limited discussed technical, and administration problems encountered at work.

Officials from Public Relations and Psychological Operation and Myanmar Television and Broadcasting Association also participated in the discussion. The deputy minister coordinated the meeting as necessary. — MNA



The MoI deputy minister chairs the online coordination meeting (2/2021) on the Broadcasting Governing Body-BGB yesterday.

## Request to Public

- Democracy practices have granted the public freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason of human rights, some persons are now under pressured, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnish the image of democracy.
- For preventing destructive actions against stability of the State, safety of the public and the rule of law, it is also required to proper actions in line with the law.
- All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of the country and people.

## Notification to Public

The pensioners, who have been withdrawing their retirement income at Myanma Economic Bank through Wave Pay and MPT Pay, due to current circumstances, will be able to withdraw pensions for March via e-Pension card at the branches of Myanma Economic Bank starting from 22 March 2021.

In order to prevent COVID-19 infection, it is informed that it can be easily withdrawn during banking hours on the following business days instead of a single day withdrawal on 22 March 2021.

Myanma Economic Bank

## MoC holds meeting on consumer affairs, consumer competition commissions

THE Ministry of Commerce held the briefing ceremony of the Myanmar Consumer Affairs Commission and Myanmar Competition Commission formed under the Consumer Affairs Law and Competition Law yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, Union Minister Dr. Pwint San instructed the attendees to expand consumer committees to facilitate operations, explain and discuss the activities of the Consumer Affairs Committee to the region/state administration councils, mainly change the national consumption of palm



Union Minister Dr. Pwint San holds talks with the Myanmar Consumer Affairs Commission and Myanmar Competition Commission yesterday.

oil to reduce the import of the oil, and conduct public awareness campaign on the reduc-

tion of consuming oil through the daily newspaper and news media. He also called for the

Competition Commission to accelerate the coordination with its partners.

The Department of Consumer Affairs explained consumer protection law, the formation of consumer affairs commissions and committees, dealing with consumer cases and plans to reduce palm oil imports in Myanmar.

The Department of Commerce explained the Competition Law, the Myanmar Competition Commission's establishment and the commission's work, cooperation with local/international organizations and further activities, and the Union Minister coordinated the meeting.—MNA

## MoHT, YRAC, MTF discuss revitalizing hotels and tourism sector

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Ohn met Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council U Hla Soe. They discussed revitalizing tourism in Yangon Region yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed the reopening of hotels and tourism businesses in the region, scrutinizing business licences, COVID-19 vaccination to hotel staff, and tour guides who will contact tourists, reopening restaurants, and promote tourism.

Afterwards, the Union Minister inspected Inya Lake Hotel, which is opened according to the COVID-19 rules and regulations and met the Myanmar Tourism Federation's chairmen and its affiliated associations.

During the meeting, he said travel restrictions have eased and resumed hotel and motel business and bus stations so that people can get out of the

overwhelming COVID-19 period and travel happily to states and regions.

He added the need to comply with the Ministry of Health and Sports' rules and regulations in opening hotels and inspection from the ministry would inspect the safety of guests staying at the hotels; the need to extensively conduct the public awareness on the resumption of domestic tourism. He continued the relevant region/state administration council will absolutely help the entrepreneurs for tourism promotion and the COVID-19 vaccinations to the hotel staff and tour guides.

He called on the Myanmar Tourism Federation and its affiliated associations to cooperate with the relevant sectors in the process of redeveloping the hotels and tourism industry and urged them to discuss the real situation they are facing so that



The MoHT Minister, YRAC chairman and MTF are discussing tourism revival on 19 March 2021.

the ministry can take necessary actions.

Afterwards, the Director-General from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Kyaw discussed necessary cooperation to revitalize tourism, repay the COVID-19 loan and further loan

assistance, and reform travel tourism committees.

The attended chairmen and responsible persons discussed the suspension of loan by the State; COVID-19 vaccinations to the people in the tourism sector; availability of nominees for membership in the committees

of associations; permission for cross-border tourism, resumption of hotels and tourism business as soon as possible; certification of local pilgrimage in all regions and states and destination management and the Union Minister coordinated the meeting.—MNA

## Notification of COVID Vaccination Fund Management Sub-Committee

FROM 12-3-2021 to 18-3-2021, local/foreign donors contributed 58.090 million Kyats to the COVID-19 Vaccination Fund Myanmar currency account OA 013733 and foreign currency account EDC 600012 opened at the Myanma Economic Bank (Nay Pyi Taw). The status of the fund account as of 18-3-2021 is as follows:

### COVID-19 Vaccination Fund OA-013733 List

	Kyat
Account opening balance on 12-3-2021	30,211,025,115.39
Received amount of money from (12-3-2021 to 18-3-2021)	58,090,000.00
Closed balance on 18-3-2021	30,269,115,115.39

### COVID-19 Vaccination Fund EDC 600012 List

	USD
Account opening balance on 12-3-2021	178,140,149.53
Received amount of money from (12-3-2021 to 18-3-2021)	-
Closed balance on 18-3-2021	178,140,149.53

# Announcement on resumption of Road Transport Administration Department's services for licences

ROAD Transport Administration Department has been providing initial licences for vehicles since 1 December 2020 at its offices. Now, with the permission of the Central Committee on Prevention, Containment and Treatment on COVID-19, the department will resume its services for annual registration for vehicles as of 22 March 2021 (Monday).

- Vehicles/motorcycles are needed to extend their licences during the periods underneath without fail regarding the month when their vehicle licences are expired.

(A) The vehicles with the licences which expired

in June 2020 and the vehicles with licences that expired in September 2020 are needed to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 May 2021.

(B) The vehicles with licences that expired in October 2020 and in November 2020 are to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 30 June 2021.

(C) The vehicles with licences expired in December 2020, and January 2021 are needed to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 July 2021.

(D) The vehicles which licences which expired in February 2021 and in March 2021 are needed to extend their

licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Vehicles with licences that will expire from April 2021 to September 2021 extend their licences in the designated period.

Those vehicles which extend the licences during the designated periods will be granted free from fines. Besides, the department will provide vehicles, except public transport vehicles, with services for extending their licences without inspecting the cars.

The vehicles with registration licences that would be abolished due to failure to extend the licences for five consecutive

years can extend their licences during the following periods. If they fail to do during the designated periods, the licences will be abolished in accordance with the Road Safety and Vehicle Management Law.

The vehicles with licences that expired on 30 June 2015 and 30 September 2015 can extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 May 2021 (Except vehicles with licences that expired in July 2015 and August 2015)

(B) The vehicles with licences expired on 31 October 2015 and 30 November 2015 are needed to extend licences from 22 March 2021 to 30 June 2021.

(C) The vehicles with li-

ences expired on 31 December 2015 and 31 January 2016 are needed to extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 July 2021.

(D) The vehicles with licences that expired on 29 February 2016 and on 31 March 2016 are needed to extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 August 2021.

The vehicles with licences expired on 30 April 2016, 31 May 2016, 30 June 2016, 31 July 2016, 31 August 2016 and 30 September 2016 are needed to extend the licences during the designated period.

Road Transport Administration Department

## Terrorists remove railway lines and authority carry out repair work

TERRORISTS removed the Yangon-Pyay railway line near Hmawby Township and the Yangon-Mandalay railway line near Thingangyun Township. The authority repaired it in time.

A 39-foot-long railway track between Mile 18 / 14-15 between Yangon-Pyay Railway Station and Hmawby Station in Hmawby Township was removed on 14 March and Yangon-Mandalay railway line in Thingangyun Township was removed and taken by terrorists on 17 March.

A group of 10 people from Thingangyun Township met near the level crossing of the Awayar Road Railway. It removed the Yangon-Mandalay Railway near that place on 17 March, and authorities carried out repair work on 18 March.

It is reported that a case under Section 84 of the Railway Transport Law (Pa) (1/2021) has been filed at the Thingangyun Police Station on 17 March regarding the damage to the railway. —MNA



Terrorists removed the Yangon-Pyay railway line near Hmawby Township and the Yangon-Mandalay railway line near Thingangyun Township.



Photo shows a saloon car the terrorists rode in.



Removed and damaged rails seen under repair by the authority concerned.

## Maymyo flower growers happy with earning good income

MAYMYO flower growers are happy with earning good income, cultivating Maymyo flowers in Kyaukton village in Minbu (Sagu)township in Magway region, according to the Myamyo flower growers in Kyaukton village.

The Maymyo flowers bloomed abundantly this year. True, the flowers are not a food item; but they are essential to Myanmar people because every household is offering the flowers to Buddha either at pagodas or Buddha images seated on the altar at their home. The flowers are also used at the wedding reception, donation ceremony, hotels, motels and other festivals as décor.



Maymyo flowers take about five months to grow. Each acre of cultivation will cost K 300,000 including ploughing and seedlings.

There are many species of flowers. Maymyo flowers take about five months to grow. Each acre of cultivation will cost K 300,000 including ploughing and seedlings. The water is irrigated

into the flower growing farms. Water is not sprayed onto the flowers. The flowers need to be irrigated every five or seven days depending upon the soil moisture. The pesticides should be sprayed when there are the insects. The fertilizer is also used only when it is necessary.

The flowers are being sold every day because they bloom plentifully and simultaneously. One flower is sold for K 80 while three flowers are sold for K 200. So, the flower growers are happy with making of good profit from cultivation of Maymyo flowers, said Daw Mya Kyi, a Maymyo flower grower from Kyaukton village.—Zayyar Htet (Minbu)/GNLM

## Ten fire outbreaks reported in Falam in 2020

A total of 10 outbreaks of fire were reported in Falam district, Chin State, in 2020, according to a report of the District Fire Services Department.

“The number of fire outbreaks could not be fixed year by year. However, there were also 11 fire outbreak cases reported in Falam in 2019. We have been conducting regular training so that fire fighters can control the incidents in a timely manner,” said U Sar Yon Man, the head of Falam District Fire Services Department.

According to the District

Fire Services Department’s statistics, the most common cause of fire was negligence followed by the faulty electrical wiring. The department also urged the people to inspect the electric wire at their houses and to ensure that quality materials are being used.

From 1 January to 31 December in 2020, a total of 10 outbreaks of fire were reported in Falam District.

Out of 10 cases in Falam District, about four cases were reported in Falam township, four in Tiddim township and two in Ton Zang township.—Lulay/GNLM

## Myanmar exports 50,000 bags of rice to China via Muse border trade daily with new permit

MYANMAR is exporting around 50,000 bags of rice and broken rice a day to China via Muse border trade zone with a new permit system, said Vice-Chair U Min Thein of the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

“After 1 March, around 80 or 90 truckloads of about 45,000 or 50,000 rice and broken rice bags are being exported daily to China,” according to the Vice Chairman.

The Chinese government has granted rice export licences for this year through Muse border trade zone to 47 companies on 26 February, according

to the Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

There will be increased rice and broken rice export value to China this year than last year as Chinese government issued more rice licences to more companies this year. However, there may also be some difficulty to transfer the money when we export the rice to China because of the current situation, he added.

Myanmar earned over US\$ 275 million from exports of over 720,000 tonnes of rice and broken rice in the first three months of this financial year (1 October to 15 January), accord-

ing to Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

However, Myanmar has expected to export only 2 million tonnes of rice in this FY because the weather changes affected irrigation water and consequently, summer paddy cultivation will have to be reduced, said U Ye Min Aung, the Chairman of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Myanmar generated over \$ 800 million from rice export in the previous FY-2019-2020 ending 30 September with an estimated volume of over 2.5 million tonnes. —NN/GNLM

## Fire breaks out at house and oil storage in Wundwin



A massive fire broke out at a house and fuel oil storage in Wundwin township (South) (new industrial block) in the Mandalay region.

The accident took place at 10:20 am on 17 March 2021, about 2 miles south of the Wundwin fire station. The residents informed the fire services department that a one-storey house of U Myint Oo and a fuel oil storage were destroyed by fire.

At least 17 fire tenders from Wundwin township were present, and over 80 firemen were involved in the rescue opera-

tion. The fire was brought under control at 11:30 am and totally extinguished at about 12:10 pm.

The fire burned down one 30x30 house and 30x30 warehouse, including 2,000 gallons of 40 diesel containers, 200 gallons of three tanks and 500 gallons of diesel. The initial estimated value of damages to the property was placed at K9,600,000.

The authorities filed charges against Min Maw Thein, 20, in charge of fuel oil station, for negligence. —Htay Hlaing (Wundwin) (Township IPRD)/GNLM

A massive fire broke out at a house and fuel oil storage in Wundwin township (South) (new industrial block) in the Mandalay region.

## Uphold spirit of solidarity and coordination to cope with challenges

With competition from the world's powerful countries and geographically strategic location, the ASEAN region faces conventional security challenges.

Meanwhile, non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, food security, health security, scarce resources, natural disasters, irregular migrant worker issue, human trafficking, drug smuggling, information security, piracy, transnational crime, terrorism and pandemic have become key issues affecting the shared vulnerability of ASEAN and its people.

Terrorism and the COVID-19 global pandemic are making the leaders and policymakers in the region much harder.

Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, terrorism continues to pose a critical threat to our region's peace and security, and it has alerted us to make greater cooperation among the ASEAN countries to eliminate the menace in all its forms.

The COVID-19 pandemic is threatening lives, stability and livelihoods across Southeast Asia. It is challenging health systems, stalling human development, testing social and political cohesion and disrupting economies.

The pandemic has much impact on the socio-economic sector, causing a rise in the poverty rate, an increase in hardships of women, delays in the education sector, hurting the social security, putting the IDPs in harm's way and people of the rural areas at high risk of infection, reducing income, generating joblessness, shrinking the global trade, causing food scarcity, and prompting a sharp drop in the tourism industry.

Hence, as part of the economic recovery in the post-COVID-19 period, we need to focus on the revival of old businesses to bring back livelihoods and to explore new businesses models through innovation and complementarities by taking into account the new normal life. Other challenges we are facing today are Immigration, and administrative weaknesses, lack of complete monitoring of illegal cash flow, rampant drug smuggling, which is the major income source of terrorists in the region, and mass accumulation of weapons from the other regions are major obstacles to fighting terrorism in the ASEAN region.

To overcome all traditional and non-traditional challenges, ASEAN member countries are urged to make stronger cooperation and to seek a solution in a concerted and coordinated effort rather than in an individual effort. This year's theme of ASEAN, "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper", which underscores the importance of fostering the well-being of people, is calling for the ASEAN members to prepare for future opportunities and uncertainties, as well as prosper together as a unified region while upholding the spirit of solidarity and coordination among member countries.

**Terrorism and the COVID-19 global pandemic are making the leaders and policymakers in the region much harder.**

## Do not use weather as a basis to relax COVID-19 control measures, UN agency urges

THE UN weather agency on Thursday cautioned that the current onset of warmer temperatures in the northern hemisphere should not be used as a trigger to relax measures to halt the spread of coronavirus.

In a new report, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) highlighted that contrary to popular assumptions about warm weather dampening viral spread, infections rose in late spring – and that "there is no evidence" that this year would be any different.

"At this stage, evidence does not support the use of meteorological and air quality factors as a basis for governments to relax their interventions aimed at reducing transmission," Ben Zaitchik, co-chair of an interdisciplinary and international WMO Task Team that produced the report, said.

"We saw waves of infection rise in warm seasons and warm regions in the first year of the pan-



In a new report, the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) highlighted that contrary to popular assumptions about warm weather dampening viral spread, infections rose in late spring – and that "there is no evidence" that this year would be any different. **PHOTO: AFP**

demic, and there is no evidence that this couldn't happen again in the coming year", Mr Zaitchik, from the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Johns

Hopkins University, added.

The report highlighted that COVID-19 transmission dynamics last year appear to have been controlled primarily by government interventions rather than meteorological factors. Other relevant drivers include changes in human behaviour and demographics of affected popu-

lations, and more recently, virus mutations.

Infection seasonality 'not yet well understood'

The report looked at the potential role of seasonality, as respiratory viral infections, like cold or influenza frequently show some form of seasonality, such as the autumn-winter peak for influenza in temperate climates. This led to speculation that, if it persists for many years, COVID-19 could be a strongly seasonal disease.

"It is premature to draw conclusions for the COVID-19 virus", WMO said.

The Task Team further noted that the evidence on the influence of air quality factors is still inconclusive. It said that there is "some preliminary evidence" that poor air quality increases COVID-19 mortality rates, but not that pollution directly impacts airborne transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The report also noted that at present there is no direct, peer reviewed evidence of pollution impacts on the airborne viability of the virus.

*Source : UN News*

COVID-19 causing SARS-CoV-2 virus "yielded some evidence that the virus survives longer under cold, dry, and low ultraviolet radiation conditions".

"However, these studies have not yet indicated if direct meteorological influences on the virus have a meaningful influence on transmission rates under real world conditions", the report added.

**Air quality influence 'still inconclusive'**

The Task Team further noted that the evidence on the influence of air quality factors is still inconclusive. It said that there is "some preliminary evidence" that poor air quality increases COVID-19 mortality rates, but not that pollution directly impacts airborne transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The underlying mechanisms that drive seasonality of respiratory viral infections are not yet well understood, according to the report.

"A combination of direct impacts on virus survival, impacts on human resistance to infection, and indirect influence of weather and season via changes in human behaviour may be at work", it said, noting that laboratory studies of

## Objectives of 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Armed Forces Day

FOR the Tatmadaw to join hands with the entire nation to safeguard democracy, which is the aspiration of all the nationalities of the country, from deviating from its path, in accord with the basic principles of the Constitution, while observing Our Three Main National Causes, which is the national policy;

To protect the people from all dangers including natural disasters at any time and in any situation and to provide all-round assistance for ensuring social security of the people;

To restore eternal peace based on NCA, without deviating from Our Three Main National Causes, as the cessation of armed conflicts is the principal requirement in realizing democracy;

To build a strong and compact Standard Army, which has the combat prowess and combat power; to effectively safeguard the State peace and stability and sovereignty.

### MYANMAR GAZETTE

## Appointment of Permanent Secretary

The State Administration Council has appointed Dr Nyi Nyi Kyaw, Director-General of the Forest Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, as Permanent Secretary of the same ministry.

## Payment startups big winners of e-commerce boom

THEY were little known before the pandemic, but startups in the flourishing digital payment industry are now worth a fortune as Covid-19 has forced people to increasingly embrace e-commerce.

Online shopping, contactless card readers and mobile payments are nothing new, but lockdowns and fears of contagion changed consumer behaviour during the coronavirus crisis.

"2020 considerably accelerated the shift in consumer preferences to electronic payments and online shopping," said Marc-Henri Desportes, deputy CEO of Worldline, a French payment and transactions processing firm.

A trio of startups -- Stripe, SumUp and Pledg -- have benefited from the shift.

Founded by two Irish brothers in 2011, Stripe catapulted to the forefront of the industry after its valuation soared to \$95 billion in the past week, nearly tripling since last year.

However, it still has a long way to catch up to the likes of Mastercard, valued above \$300

billion.

The California-based payments processing firm reached its new valuation after raising \$600 million in funding from investors last weekend.

On Tuesday, the British startup SumUp, which provides card payment terminals and online services, raised 750 million euros in funding.

On the same day, the Paris-based startup Pledg, which specializes in installment payment services, raised 80 million euros.

"We've done in one year a transformation which would in normal times take three or five years," said Desportes.

### PayPal and We Chat

According to a study by the consulting firm Accenture published last year, global payments revenue may rise by \$500 billion over the coming years to hit \$2 trillion in 2025.

The biggest names in the sector include US firms PayPal, Apple Pay and Visa, and China's WeChat Pay and Alipay.

Others on the rise include US firm Square and Dutch-based

Adyen.

Stripe's "recent valuation is maybe a signal that the accelerating forces of Covid are going to actually make it a lot easier for fintechs to sort of become more successful with greater market share," said Matt Palframan, director of financial services research at survey and data firm YouGov.

On the same day, the Paris-based startup Pledg, which specializes in installment payment services, raised 80 million euros.

"The really interesting thing ... is to what extent do consumers go back to how they were living before Covid as we emerge from the crisis and to what extent some of this behavioural change is permanent," he added.

That question is crucial for fintechs (finance technology companies) like Stripe, which helps online retailers with payments processing, said Palframan.

### Value up for grabs

It is also important for the other firms that offer accessory services like multifactor authentication, loyalty programmes and instalment payments which are becoming more and more popular among retailers.

With commissions for each



Online shopping, contactless card readers and mobile payments are nothing new, but lockdowns and fears of contagion changed consumer behaviour during the coronavirus crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

transaction low, volume becomes key to becoming profitable.

For example, a payments processor like Worldline handles 10 billion transactions per year for retailers.

"There is value up for grabs,

particularly from merchants who are already used to handing over several percentage points of

transactions to the payment processor," said Thomas Rocafull, a consultant at Sia Partners.

But retailers also stand to

gain. "Once a client has made the effort to enter his payment details in an electronic wallet or app, they'll probably think twice before changing," he added.

*Source : AFP*

## Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 2:00 pm Friday 19 March, 2021)

### SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs

**M.S.T.**: During the past (24) hours, weather has been generally fair in Naypyitaw, Bago Region and (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Kayah States and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above March average temperatures in Naypyitaw, Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Kachin, (Northern and Southern) Shan, Chin, Kayah States and (2°C) above March average temperatures in Magway, Bago Regions and Eastern Shan, Mon States and about March average temperatures in the remaining Regions and States. The significant day temperatures were (42°C) each in Tada U (Asia) and Chauk and (41°C) each in Mandalay, Magway, Aunglan, Sinbyugyun and Hpasaung.

**BAY INFERENCE**: Weather is a few cloud over the Andaman Sea and partly cloudy over the Bay of Bengal.

### FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 20th March, 2021

**2021**: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Mandalay Regions and Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**STATE OF THE SEA**: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-6) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS**: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region and Kachin, Eastern Shan, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States.

# Fishery exports plunge to \$380.65 mln in 2020-2021FY

EXPORT earnings from the fisheries sector during the period between 1 October and 5 March in the financial year 2020-2021 touched a low of US\$380.65 million, a decrease of \$47.8 million from the year-ago period, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The figures stood at just \$428.457 million during a year-ago period.

Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF) expected to earn more than \$800 million from fishery exports in the FY2019-2020, and it reached a target.

Myanmar exports fisheries products, such as fish, prawns, and crabs, to markets in 40 countries, including China, Saudi Arabia, the US, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and countries in the European Union.

Myanmar's fishery exports have slightly declined over the past months, owing to the COVID-19 impacts and the current trade delay amid the political changes.

Additionally, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) issued guidelines to ensure food safety during the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020.

The permitted companies are advised to carry out food safety plans, follow the WHO



China is the second-largest buyer of Myanmar's fishery products, accounting for US\$254 million out of the overall fishery export value of \$850 million in the financial year 2019-2020.

and FAO guidelines, formulate the safety management system, and suspend the exports if any suspicious foodborne virus or virus infection risk are found in the products. They can resume the exports once the products meet food safety criteria set by the General Administration of Customs of China's People Republic (GACC).

China is the second-largest buyer of Myanmar's fishery products, accounting for US\$254 million out of the overall fishery export value of \$850 million in the financial year 2019-2020.

The federation expects to reach a fishery export target of US\$1 billion in the current FY2020-2021.

The MFF is making concerted efforts to increase fishery export earnings by developing fish farming lakes that meet international standards and adopting advanced fishing techniques.

To ensure food safety, the foreign market requires suppliers to obtain Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Good Aquaculture Practices (GAqP) certificates.

To meet international mar-

ket standards, fishery products must be sourced only from hatcheries that are compliant with GAqP. The MFF works with fish farmers, processors, and the Fisheries Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation to develop the GAqP system.

Processors can screen fishery products for food safety at ISO-accredited laboratories under the Fisheries Department.

There are 480,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the country and more than 120 cold-storage facilities

in Myanmar.

Myanmar exported 340,000 tonnes of fishery products worth \$530 million in the 2013-2014FY, 330,000 tonnes worth \$480 million in the 2014-2015FY, 360,000 tonnes worth \$500 million in the 2015-2016FY, 430,000 tonnes worth \$600 million in the 2016-2017FY, 560,000 tonnes worth \$700 million in the 2017-2018FY, 580,000 tonnes worth over \$730 million in the 2018-2019FY and \$847.5 million, according to the Commerce Ministry.

An MFF official said the federation had asked the government to tackle problems faced in exporting farm-raised fish and prawns through G2G pacts and ensuring smooth freight movement between countries to bolster exports.

Myanmar's economy is more dependent on the agricultural sector to a large extent. Also, the fisheries sector contributes a lot to the national gross domestic product (GDP). Its fishery production, including shrimps and saltwater and freshwater fish, is far better than the regional countries. If the government can boost processing technology, it will contribute to the country's economy and earn more income for those stakeholders in the supply chain, Yangon Region Fisheries Department stated. — KK/GNLM

## Teak seedlings grown for tree planting season this year

THE Agriculture Department in Htilin township is cultivating the teak seedlings for planting them in the Forest Department's gardens in this year's monsoon tree planting season.

"Rain provides a good opportunity for seedlings to flourish. About 30,000 seedlings of teak are ready for growing as soon as the monsoon arrives. The department has already planted 10,000 seedlings of teak in Htilin town garden, 10,000 seedlings of teak in Ye Myatni village garden and 10,000 seedlings of teak in Kyin village garden," said an official from Township Forest Department.

Moreover, the department has 400 seedling trees of Pterocarpus macrocarpus (Padauk), 1,000 trees of Neem, 100 trees of Eugenia, 100 trees of Acacia mangium and, other 500 trees. —Sein Kyaw/GNLM

## MoC reports: trade deficit shrinks to \$235.76 mln as of 5 March

MYANMAR'S trade gap has significantly narrowed to US\$235.76 million in the financial year 2020-2021 from just \$926.57 million registered in the corresponding period of the 2019-2020FY, according to data provided by the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October and 5 March in the current FY, Myanmar's external trade drastically plunged to \$13.548 billion from \$17.226 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

While exports were estimated at \$6.65 billion, imports were valued at \$6.89 billion this FY. Compared to the FY2019-2020, exports showed a drop of over \$1.49 billion, while imports fell by \$2.18 billion.

Myanmar witnessed a slump in exports triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, the country cannot hold jade emporiums last year. As a result of this, export income plummeted, according

to Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

Both sea trade and border trade dropped amid the coronavirus impacts and political changes. The neighbouring countries tightened border security and limited trading time to contain the virus's spread. Pandemic-induced container shortage pushed up the freight rates to almost triple in Myanmar, causing delays for traders.

At present, some ocean liners suspended cargo transport from Myanmar in recent days. The cargo transport will double or triple if we conduct the trade with small ships. It could harm the export sector somehow, according to Myanmar Merchant Marine Development Association.

"The closure of private banks and the current political instability wreaks havoc on trade," an exporter stressed.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products,

minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods. At the same time, it imports capital goods, raw industrial materials, and consumer goods.

The country's export sector relies more on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

The Ministry of Commerce is endeavouring to boost export under the World Trade Organization's rules, enhance value-added production and competitiveness, reduce export barriers and provide trade financing services. The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. The country mainly imports essential goods, construction materials, capital goods, hygienic material and supporting products for export promotion and import substitution.

Myanmar's trade deficit was pegged at \$1.3 billion in the 2019-2020FY, \$1.14 billion in the 2018-2019 FY, \$1.3 billion in

the previous mini-budget period (April-September, 2018), \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$5.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization.

Under the National Planning Law for the Financial Year 2020-2021, Myanmar intends to reach an export target of US\$16 billion and import at \$18 billion.

The Ministry of Commerce has adhered to its policy reform depending on the State and people's requirements. Moreover, a series of trade liberalization and openness for policy development have been introduced for enhancing a more viable trade environment. The private sector plays a prominent role in Myanmar's market-oriented economic system. The ministry is highlighting free and fair trade, ensuring product safety and quality goods and services. — HH/GNLM

# To peaceful protestors

By Maung Phyu Lay

Some of the media express the security forces use violence against peaceful protestors. Then, the western countries accused the security forces like the violence against the protestors for the restoration of democracy are such abhorrent manners. The security forces are also accused of using brutalities against protestors locally.

Therefore, I think people should consider whether they are staging a strike peacefully. Those protesting peacefully should take into account this issue.

Blocking the roads, set fire to tires, making road-blocks, using catapults, Molotov cocktail, hand-made bomb and hand-made guns seem to threaten the innocent people and community peace, and so do these doings mean peaceful protests?

The people raid the police station, attack the security forces and make arson at government building, public and private enterprise build-

ings and factories by blocking the ways to stop the security forces and firefighters from reaching the incident places.

Do the moves like thinking of enemies with those who do not join CDM, making threats to those who do not protest and committing social punishment, including murder, meaning peaceful protest?

Insulting banking staff and government staff by destroying the governmental building, not opening the banks, shouting slangs to fail the government mechanism with successful CDM, and convincing the youths to take to the streets really mean peaceful protest manners?

There are so many things to say. They violate the Constitution and existing law to destroy the peace and tranquillity of the State and the rule of law and make people feel insecure. Are these manners peaceful protest?

Those staging peaceful protest should think about it.

Insulting banking staff and government staff by destroying the governmental building, not opening the banks, shouting slangs to fail the government mechanism with successful CDM, and convincing the youths to take to the streets really mean peaceful protest manners?

Do the unscrupulous persons stand with you? Do they show off their appearance? Do you know who they are? Did you ever think why did they commit such incitements to unrest riots with what purposes, hope and be-

liefs? Do you know they are standing with illegal assistance? Do you believe these unlawful organizations without any legitimacy?

The ones who face the hardships are the people, including innocent young students. They have to face fears and causalities daily. The people are facing troubles.

Therefore, negative thoughts should end. There should not be nonsense movements that can affect the country and people any more. The incitement to youths leading to wrong ways should be stopped.

It is better to know what is happening in the country, the current ruling officials' performances and their responsibilities and accountabilities rather than believing

the negative incitement.

Don't say such doings represent the desire of entire people and attitude of whole people. It is totally wrong. There are many people who disagree with today's protest. Some people also want to know why the government does not take decisive actions against those people. You should understand and agree with these situations.

Therefore, we should stop all engagements that affect the country and people. We should fulfil the wishes of people who want to stay peacefully. Why do not we think about the positive things for the sake of the country and people?

May the country and people be safe and peaceful.

Translated.

Therefore, negative thoughts should end. There should not be nonsense movements that can affect the country and people any more. The incitement to youths leading to wrong ways should be stopped.

## SOCIETY: WORLD

# Australia sees first population drop since WWI

AUSTRALIA'S population has declined for the first time in more than a century as pandemic-induced border closures stemmed the flow of overseas migrants, according to figures released yesterday.

The Australian Bureau of

Statistics said the population grew by less than one per cent in the year to September 2020, and actually declined in the last recorded quarter.

"The last time we saw population decline was the year to December 1916, during World

War I," said the bureau's Demography Director Phil Browning.

For centuries, Australia's economic growth has been built on mining and agriculture and fuelled by several waves of mass migration from Europe, Asia and beyond.

But the country, the world's largest island with only 25.7 million people, effectively sealed itself off from the rest of the world at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures – coupled with aggressive coronavirus testing, tracing and snap

lockdowns – have limited COVID-19 infections and allowed the economy to open up with limited restrictions.

"Decreases to overseas migration have been observed over the last two quarters," Browning said. —AFP ■

# To young people at the forefront

By Shwe Yunn

Myanmar has been described as a young country for its larger portion of young people in the country. The saying "Youth today, senior tomorrow" is widely known in Myanmar. Moreover, "Young people are the future of the country" is the statement every politician repeatedly uses.

We cannot forget the importance of parents, teachers, and good friends who set guidelines for those young people can achieve a bright future. In Myanmar's political situation today, the role of Generation Z has been given special attention. Although it seems that letting young people take to the streets is to provide them with favour to be involved in a political role, it is not 100 per cent right.

It is true that young people are active, creative and are quick learners. However, they still do not have substantial experience. As the saying goes, "learn at first age", the young people who are in just their first age of life should study in order to have an easy life. They must decide which is right and which is wrong with their own review of the current political situation. Facebook, used by most of them, cannot

be their leader, nor every content on Facebook can be true. It is time for them to decide everything only after careful consideration.

It does not seem the right thing that young people are used as a human shield in protests during the unstable political situation. But, it is sad to see them wearing clothes that make them visible in demonstrations. The egoism of those who are using young people for their benefits can be seen selling huts, peacock flags, bags and other accessories.

People should be aware of those who can love the country only on Facebook are continuously inciting young people to take to the streets, but they remain at the back. Letting the young people at the forefront in confronting the security forces are actually destroying their future.

As a nation to be built as a federal democratic nation, it is very important for them to respect and follow democracy standards. Democracy policy is to guarantee respect for human rights and rules to be followed for the entire essence of democracy. We should consider the byproducts of refusing to follow the rules of

democracy. Any act conducted outside of the law, outside of the rules, will not issue good result.

According to democracy,

everyone has the full rights to hold their own opinions and express them freely. Although young people have freedom of speech, freedom of expres-

sion, freedom of association according to the standards of democracy, the involvement of those who do not respect or follow them can turn the situation into wild and violent.

At present, it has been over a month since the Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) brought about acts against the democracy standards, which led to more confrontations of young people from the frontline with security forces. As confrontation never results in good, young people must consider it before doing any activities, leading to the destruction of their future and ambition. Moreover, after listening to encouragement as heroes, parents who do not prevent their children will have to take their rage at themselves when they experience an unexpected situation.

It is necessary for young people to be aware of their incitements to push them to the forefront and commit crimes. Those who stay behind the instigation are the knives to stab in the back, and I wish young people could study the current situation with careful consideration.

Translated.

## PANDEMIC: ASIA

### India to produce 200 million doses of Sputnik V

THE developer of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine said Friday it had signed a partnership with an India-based drugmaker for the production of 200 million doses of the two-dose jab.

The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), which backed the development of Sputnik V, said in a statement it had partnered with Stelis Biopharma "to produce and supply a minimum of 200 mil-

lion doses of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine." Stelis Biopharma is expected to be able to start supplying the vaccine from the second half of the year.

RDIF, added that Stelis – the biopharma unit of global pharmaceutical company Strides – will work with the Russian wealth fund to provide supplies "beyond the initial agreement." RDIF head Kirill Dmitriev said that the "significant

vaccine volumes" produced with Stelis "will help widen access to the vaccine on a global scale." RDIF said Friday that 52 countries have approved the use of Russia's Sputnik V, named after the Soviet-era satellite.

Moscow registered the jab in August before large-scale clinical trials, but leading medical journal The Lancet has since said it is safe and over 90% effective. —AFP ■



A nurse shows the Sputnik V vaccine at a clinic in Moscow. **PHOTO: AFP**

### Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm](mailto:aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm) with your name and title.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "**Letter to the Editor**" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

# EU launches legal action against UK over Gibraltar tax

BRUSSELS launched legal action on Friday to force Britain to recover €100 million in tax exemptions for multinational firms operating in Gibraltar. European Commission vice-president Margrethe Vestager said the UK had failed to claw back the sum despite the EU deeming the tax breaks "illegal state aid".

The sum, equivalent to \$119 million, is small relative to many EU state subsidy cases, but the case is the latest in a string of spats between the EU and

post-Brexit Britain.

"The aid granted by Gibraltar in the form of corporate tax exemption for passive interest and royalties gave an unfair advantage to some multinational companies," Vestager said. "More than two years after the Commission adopted this decision, the aid has still not been recovered in full and sufficient progress has not been made in restoring competition," she said. "That is why we have decided to refer the United Kingdom to the Court of

Justice for failing to implement this decision."

The United Kingdom left the European Union last year, but the case dates back to a period before Brexit over which Brussels says the European Court of Justice still has jurisdiction.

Gibraltar is a British overseas territory with a border with southern Spain and European member states have long had concerns over its competitive tax regime.

In December 2018, the European Commission de-



People cross the Spanish border of the British overseas territory of Gibraltar. **PHOTO: AFP**

cided that some corporate tax exemptions granted to

multinationals in Gibraltar between 2011 and 2013 broke EU rules against state subsidy.—AFP ■

## Bank of Japan holds negative rates, tweaks easing policy



The central bank is attempting to tailor its policies to respond to the pandemic and keep on track towards its longstanding goal of two percent inflation. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE Bank of Japan on Friday maintained its negative interest rate and tweaked its monetary easing programme as it battles to boost inflation and shore up the pandemic-hit economy.

The adjustment,

which marginally expands the fluctuation in long-term rates for 10-year bonds that the bank will accept, is seen as a potential forerunner to further tweaks in policy.

The bank also said it would allow more flexibil-

ity in its stock purchases, dropping a target for its intervention in the Tokyo stock market, which has strongly recovered since crashing in spring 2020 as the pandemic began to bite. The bank's policies were otherwise largely left untouched after its two-day meeting, with an interest rate of -0.1 per cent left intact, as well as an annual ceiling on stock purchases. Tokyo's Nikkei index tumbled 1.5 per cent with selling picking up after the announcement.

The central bank is attempting to tailor its policies to respond to the pandemic and keep on track towards its longstanding goal of two percent inflation, which remains far

from sight.

"It is important to strike an appropriate balance between maintaining market functioning and controlling interest rates by allowing interest rates to fluctuate to a certain degree," it said.

"For the time being, the bank will closely monitor the impact of Covid-19 and will not hesitate to take additional easing measures if necessary," it added. Bank governor Haruhiko Kuroda denied any immediate plan to consider an exit strategy from the easing policy.

"On top of the coronavirus situation, we have yet to realize the two-per cent price target," he told reporters.—AFP ■

## Energy giant Eni offers to pay \$14m to settle Congo graft inquiry

ITALIAN energy giant Eni said Thursday it had filed a request with a Milan court to pay 14 million dollars (11.8 million euros) to settle an investigation into corruption in Congo-Brazzaville levied at the company and one of its managers.

According to Italian media, the probe was first launched in 2017, and relates to payment of suspected bribes when oil licences in Congo-Brazzaville were being renewed in 2015. To secure renewal, Eni was accused of agreeing to sell parts of its licence to a shell corporation maintained by Congolese public officials.

In a statement, Eni said the request was not an admission of guilt, "but an initiative aimed at avoiding the continuation (of) a judicial

process that would entail further expenditure of resources from Eni and all the involved parties". The court reducing the alleged offence from international corruption to undue inducement had paved the way for a settlement, the company explained. Eni refused to divulge to AFP the name of the manager implicated.

The news comes the day after an Italian court cleared Eni and Shell of charges related to a major oil exploration deal in Nigeria in which \$1.1 billion allegedly ended up in the pockets of corrupt politicians and middlemen.

Among the 13 individual defendants was Eni's chief executive, Claudio Descalzi, for whom prosecutors sought an eight-year prison term.—AFP ■

## In pandemic year, Syrians blocked from Zoom, Netflix

VIRTUAL platforms like Netflix and Zoom have emerged as lifelines for a pandemic-hit world forced indoors, but in sanctioned Syria where both websites are blocked, Mohammad Habash feels increasingly disconnected.

"We are living in a bubble isolated from the outside world," the 35-year-old tech expert says from an electronics repair shop in Damascus. "This isolation has meant that an entire generation of young Syrians are technologically disadvantaged compared to their global peers".

Even before the war



Journalist Zeina Shahla says she has had to turn down dozens of conferences over the past year because they were being held on Zoom, which Syria is barred from accessing. **PHOTO: AFP**

started in 2011, tech giants like Amazon, Apple and Google couldn't freely operate in Syria because

of US sanctions forbidding the export, sale or supply of goods, software, technology and services without US

government authorization.

The tight restrictions, although rare, are not unique to the war-torn country. They also apply to other US-sanctioned states such as North Korea, while Iran benefits from certain exemptions. While they were intended to weaken the Syrian government, the controls have also restricted access to an online universe that helped many cope with coronavirus confinement. "Syrians can't access any Western platform on the internet – not for education, online shopping, work or leisure" says Habash.—AFP ■

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V AEGEAN EXPRESS VOY. NO. (206N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V EVER CHANT VOY. NO. (0231-028N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-3-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department  
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

**M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING LINES**

# Ingapu, Thushintakayuppi, Naungyoe battle

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

Translated by Than Tun Aung

**I**NGAPU, the town in Hinthada District of Ayeyawady Region, was famous thanks to the related history of Mon King Thushintakayuppi and Naungyoe battle.

Naungyoe battle was very famous in 1537 AD due to the military tactic of destroying pontoons by General Kyawhtin Nawrahta, who would become King Bayintnaung. Mon King Thushintakayuppi, who was defeated in the Naungyoe battle, passed away, and it was assumed that his remains were buried in Ingapu.

## Historical background of Ingapu

Ingapu, 24 miles from Hinthada, is located on the right bank of Kanyin Creek, which flows into Ngawun River. The

town is located in the historic Shwehsandaw Pagoda, the tomb of Mon King Thushintakayuppi and the unspoiled remains of four monks. The town was a base of establishing Dvara Gana of Theravada Buddhism in Myanmar and was home to Yonsin Village, the native land of Bo Aung Kyaw, who fell in 1938.

According to the historical records, the title of Ingapu was derived from Ingapura, Okpo and Ingapu. It was just a small village and it then became a town in 10th century, according to the Myanmar Encyclopaedia.

According to the documents of the Ministry of Home Affairs, King Thamuddagawtha and queen, daughter of King Okkalapa Ohnmadanti, established 32 cities of Pathein,

including Ingapu. Prince Ingapo was given to govern the city, so the city was named Ingapura. Later, the city was ruled by Thihabo, Maha Thihabo and Maha Seiktabo successively.

In the reign of King Alaungmintaya, Ingapu station was ruled by Thihabo. In the time of Seiktabo, Ingapura was moved to Okpo. It is the area of current Ingapu where Princess Ohnmadanti made bricks to be used in building Shwehsandaw Pagoda.

After Seiktabo, his son U San Min ruled Ingapu. In 1269 ME in the time of the British colonial era, U Maung Maung Sein, son of U San Min became the administrator of Ingapu together with younger brother U Maung Maung Arnt, who served as head of the city. In the same year, the town was of-



Elephant statue from the venue assumed as tomb of King Thushintakayuppi



Shwehsandaw Pagoda in Ingapu

ficially named Ingapu, ruled by town administrator U Maung Tin.

The Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs formed Ingapu with three wards on 24 June 1972 and set village-tracts in the township on 30 December. Now, Ingapu Township is formed with Ingapu and Htugyi towns, eight wards and 653 villages in 72 village-tracts.

Ingapu Township, on 628.20 square miles of land, shares border with Monyo Township in the east, Gwa Township in the west, Hinthada Township

in the south and Myanaung Township in the north.

The route from Yangon to Ingapu passes Danubyu, Zalun and Hinthada. People have access to Ingapu through Pathein-Monywa road. Trains run along the route passing Ingapu, Pathein, Yekyi, Athoke, Myanaung and Kyangin.

## Historic Naungyoe Battle

King Bayintnaung (1551-1581 AD), who established the Second Myanmar Empire, served as a general before the life of the king to lead fighting



in the Naungyoe battle with victory.

In 1532 AD, King Tabinshwehti reigned over Toungoo while King Thushintakayuppi ruled Hanthawady. In 1537 AD, King Tabinshwehti conquered Hanthawady, so King Thushintakayuppi evaded to Pyay. The king attempted to cooperate with Pyay King Narapati to fight against King Tabinshwehti. So, King Tabinshwehti marched to Pyay, and General Kyawhtin Nawrahta was ordered to lead the troops.

Kyawhtin Nawrahta

gathered military boats from Hanthawady and formed seven boat units. King Tabinshwehti marched along the waterway while Kyawhtin Nawrahta marched along the land routes. On arrival at Naungyoe, Kyawhtin Nawrahta based his troops on the bank and ordered his servant to climb the highest tree for viewing the enemies. In that regard, Byeinya Dala and Minye Aung Naing deployed five troops with elephants and horses on the opposite bank of Naungyoe. Such an amount of enemy was larger than those of Kyawhtin Nawrahta.

Without trembling, Kyawhtin Nawrahta prepared his troops for fighting. He remarked, "Nature of battle did not depend on strengths but capabilities." After the troops of Kyawhtin Nawrahta had crossed the river, Tuyinraza conveying the order of King Tabinshwehti, arrived there, saying that all troops were ordered not to launch fighting and to wait for the king, and when the king arrived there, fighting would be launched.

Kyawhtin Nawrahta urged

Tuyinraza to submit the report that the battle was over with victory. And, the general ordered to destroy pontoons to remove the doubts over the battle whether they would win or lose. Some commanders supplicated that even the battle was not launched, the report on victory over the battle was submitted to the king. If they faced loss in the battle, they would have difficulties due to the destruction of pontoons.

Kyawhtin Nawrahta noted, "If pontoons are not destroyed, you all would have the wish to run into the pontoons when face loss in the fighting. If you don't have any pontoons, you all will bravely fight against enemies in the battle." In fact, it was the nature of heroes.

"I ordered to submit a report of victory over the battle before the fighting. If we are defeated, we don't dare to face scolding of the king. If we lose to enemies in the fighting, we are never alive. When we are dead, the king will not scold us." "If we win the battle, we will be alive. If we lose, we will die. When we are dead, how

will the king scold us?" Due to the dynamism of strategic and military tactics as well as the psychological warfare of Kyawhtin Nawrahta, they won over the enemies in Naungyoe battle.

One day after the battle, King Tabinshwehti arrived the scene, asking: "Kyawhtin Nawrahta! You didn't wait for me to fight against the enemies. Did you disturb my mission?"

Kyawhtin Nawrahta replied: "Naungyoe battle was not deserved for his majesty king but for our servants only. It was the fighting between the servants of both sides. In the future, many battles will come out for his majesty king. His Majesty should fight the troops of Hanthawady King, please." And seized elephants, horses, weapons and prisoners of war were handed over to the king.

Due to high satisfaction, King Tabinshwehti presented his ruby bracelet and ring to Kyawhtin Nawrahta as rewards, ordered to govern Hline City and conferred Bayintnaung title on Kyawhtin Nawrahta.

Bayingnaung became

crown prince in 1541 and came onto the throne on 13 January 1551. He established the second Myanmar empire and passed away on 12 November 1581 at 66 years old.

Scholars guessed Naungyoe battle might be located near Pyay. The bank crossed by troops of General Kyawhtin Nawrahta might be located near Einme, showing a map by historian Dr Than Tun. Some scholars assumed Naungyoe might be located between Dahka River and Minmanaing Creek. Some scholars guessed Naungyoe might take position near Dauntaungyi Village, the southern bank of the Dahka River, west of Einme.

#### Tomb of King Thushintakayuppi

When King Tabinshwehti returned to Hanthawady, King Thushintakayuppi came back to Ingapu from Pyay to recruit troops. When he arrived in Ingapu, he heard information that an elephant lived there. So, he tried to hunt the elephant, but he passed away in Ingapu with a fever the same night.

As the king's remains were cremated in Ingapu, some scholars assumed that the remains might be buried between the east and southeast corners of the platform of Shwehsandaw Pagoda. An elephant statue heading to eastward can be seen in the place where the tomb of King Thushintakayuppi might be buried. The elephant statue does not turn to the pagoda but to the eastward.

Some scholars assumed ministers built an elephant statue in commemoration of the hobby of King Thushintakayuppi in hunting elephants with the further symbol to miss native Hanthawady. Now, the venue and elephant statue are under the preservation of Shwehsandaw Pagoda board of trustees.

King Thushintakayuppi fell into the trick of Toungoo King Tabinshwehti and killed his reliable Byeinya Law and Byeinya Kyan. So, he missed the chance to victory over the battle and ran away to Pyay and then passed away in Ingapu.

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Statue of King Bayintnaung

## AFC Cup Group H and I to be held in Singapore

TWO group matches of the Asian Football Confederation Cup: named Group H and I, will be held in Singapore following an official announcement made by the AFC recently.

Two Myanmar representing teams have a chance to participate in the tourney to

be held in Singapore.

Singapore will be hosting Group I with Geylang International FC of Singapore, Kaya FC-Iloilo of the Philippines and Terengganu FC of Malaysia and either Shan United FC or Ayeyawady United FC of Myanmar.

Meanwhile, Group H will comprise Kedah Darul Aman FC of Malaysia, Lion City Sailors FC of Singapore, Saigon FC of Viet Nam and the winner of the ASEAN Zone Play-off 2 match.

Ahead of the group stages, Yazeen Buhari, the General

Secretary of the FA of Singapore, said, "We would like to thank the AFC for its confidence in Singapore. With this news of us being the host city for both groups, we will discuss in detail with Sport Singapore and other relevant government agencies the conditions we

need to establish during this pandemic to keep the competition safe."

"The FAS prioritises the health and safety of the players and officials, and we will spare no effort to ensure our local community remains safe", Yazeen Buhari added.—GNLM ■

## England boss Southgate says footballers should be offered vaccine soon



England manager Gareth Southgate says footballers should be offered coronavirus vaccines soon as they are being asked to take risks by playing regularly during the pandemic. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

LONDON — England manager Gareth Southgate says footballers should be offered coronavirus vaccines soon as they are being asked to take risks by playing regularly during the pandemic.

The UK, hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis, this week passed the mark of 25 million jabs delivered as part of a rapid rollout.

Footballers do not fall into

the categories vaccinated so far, based on factors such as age and existing medical conditions, but have been travelling for club and international matches since the sport resumed last year. Southgate feels a strain could be taken off the state-run National Health Service (NHS) if football were able to step in and begin its own vaccination programme.

The England boss, speaking after announcing his squad for World Cup qualifiers, admitted a looming vaccine supply shortfall could prove a stumbling block.

"My view would have been we were close to getting to the point where it would have been acceptable for professional sportsmen to be on that list," he said. "We are asking them to keep playing. —AFP ■

## Man Utd to face Granada in Europa League quarter-finals

LONDON — Manchester United were paired with Spanish side Granada in Friday's draw for the quarter-finals of the Europa League, while Arsenal will take on Slavia Prague.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United, who beat AC Milan in the last 16, are due to play away in the first leg on April 8 but it remains to be seen where that match will take place.

The Old Trafford club faced Spanish opponents in Real Sociedad in the last 32 but the first leg of that tie was moved to Turin in Italy because of restrictions on travel from

the UK to Spain as a result of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Ajax will face Roma with the winners of that quarter-final playing either United or Granada in the last four. United beat Ajax in the 2017 Europa League final.

Arsenal are set to host Slavia in the first leg of their quarter-final and will be wary of the runaway Czech league leaders who have eliminated Leicester City and Scottish champions Rangers in the last two rounds.

However if the Gunners get through they could face their former coach Unai Emery in the semi-finals.—AFP ■



Paul Pogba's goal gave Manchester United victory against AC Milan in their last 16, second leg on Thursday. **PHOTO: AFP**

## Top-seeded Tsitsipas reaches ATP Acapulco semi-finals



Top-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece on the way to a three-set quarter-final victory over Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime in the 2021 ATP Acapulco tournament. **PHOTO: AFP**

ACAPULCO — Top-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas clawed his way past Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-5, 4-6, 6-3 on Thursday to reach the semi-finals of the ATP hardcourt tournament in Acapulco.

The world number five from Greece will take on Italian qualifier Lorenzo Musetti, who defeated fifth-seeded Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).

Tsitsipas dropped his opening service game against the seventh-seeded Canadian, clawing back with a break before finally reeling off the last six points of the opening set. He couldn't maintain the momentum, however, going down an early break

again in the second set as Auger-Aliassime leveled the match.

The third set was a tense affair and it was Auger-Aliassime who cracked, coughing up back-to-back double faults to hand Tsitsipas the first break of the frame for a 5-3 lead and a chance to serve out the match.

Tsitsipas, who is vying to reach a first final of 2021, reached the semi-finals at the Australian Open in February and at Rotterdam earlier this month, but is coming off a quarter-final ouster by 93rd-ranked Pierre-Hugues Herbert in Marseille. —AFP ■